

ACCESS TO HEALTH INFORMATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY: A CHATBOT VALIDATED BY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Rafael Silva Brito

Universidade do Estado de Minas Geraiss
Passos – Minas Geraiss
<https://lattes.cnpq.br/7650585414800524>

Daniel Oliveira Santos

Universidade do Estado de Minas Geraiss
Passos – Minas Geraiss
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/3446624797035350>

Lucas Yuji Sonoda

Universidade do Estado de Minas Geraiss
Passos – Minas Geraiss
<https://lattes.cnpq.br/4436574398014479>

Ana Paula Lopes

Universidade do Estado de Minas Geraiss
Passos – Minas Geraiss
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/9867555539146519>

Thiago Rangel Xavier

Universidade do Estado de Minas Geraiss
Passos – Minas Geraiss
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/7324903402832407>

Leonardo Pim Barcelos

Universidade do Estado de Minas Geraiss
Passos – Minas Geraiss
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/5042004535571708>

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Rayane Drumond Mól

Universidade do Estado de Minas Gerais
Passos – Minas Gerais
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/4054343889941842>

Gustavo Fernandes da Silva

Universidade do Estado de Minas Gerais
Passos – Minas Gerais
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/2706636001171879>

Gabriela Sabbadini Andrade

Universidade do Estado de Minas Gerais
Passos – Minas Gerais
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/1040199431479563>

Policardo Gonçalves da Silva

Universidade do Estado de Minas Gerais
Passos – Minas Gerais
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/8029979089285619>

Abstract: Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a serious public health problem in Brazil and worldwide. Especially in the young and low-income population. Prevention is a fundamental pillar in the control of these diseases, however, a large portion of the population does not have access to quality information. Given this scenario, the construction of an instrument that guarantees free access to health information proved to be a feasible alternative, as it is a reliable and confidential tool. This way, a chatbot was created, a tool that, through the construction of logical flows - based on information technology programming, allows communication with the user in an interactive and objective way, in order to promote education and guidance in health using a language accessible to the population, with a view to STI prevention. This tool provided an empowerment of its users, being, therefore, a reliable alternative of access to information with relevance in the context of education and communication in health.

Keywords: Access to Health Information, Access to Health Technologies, Health Education, IST

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are considered a serious public health problem in Brazil and worldwide. According to Costa (2022, p. 1), in the period from 2009 to 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated an incidence of about 376.4 million cases of STIs considered curable. Currently, prevention is the fundamental pillar in the control of these infections, however, a large portion of the population does not have access to quality, updated and scientifically based information, such as the recognition of risk situations and the need to adhere to prevention, diagnosis and prevention strategies. and treatment. In addition, STIs have a high prevalence among the young

population, especially, according to Costa (2020, p.1) in those with low socioeconomic levels. This population is at the beginning of their sexual practices, undergoing a process of biopsychosocial transformations and, not always, they are in an environment conducive to dialogue on the subject. In addition, as Fonte (2018, p.6) states, it is common to find, in these populations, gaps in prior learning, which may even be non-existent, and one can add to this context the restriction on access to health services. In addition, the situation of vulnerability in which LGBTQIA+ populations and sex workers find themselves, groups that also have a notorious prevalence of STIs, whose situation could be mitigated if there were more information and awareness tools about these comorbidities. Given this scenario, the construction of an instrument that guarantees free access to health information proved to be a feasible alternative, as it is a reliable and confidential tool. This way, a Chatbot was created, which is a software that promotes a dialogue with a person through a previously structured technological programming, elaborated in the format of questions and answers, with the user having the ability to explore topics of which he wants to have more information. That is, it consists of a tool that, through the construction of logical flows - based on information technology programming, allows communication with the user in an interactive and objective way. The objectives of this initiative were to promote health education and guidance using an accessible language for the population, with a view to STI prevention through the Chatbot named "Health Information and Communication Chatbot - CICS", with updated scientific information. In addition, all the content available in the tool was prepared from a review of the scientific literature (in the databases - LILACS, SciELO, MEDLINE, CAPES - and manuals of the Ministry of

Health of Brazil) compiled in order to address STIs highest epidemiological prevalence in the country. It is worth mentioning that the entire theoretical basis was developed by a team and reviewed by a medical professional and a nursing professional in the area of Infectious Diseases. The STIs addressed by the Chatbot were: HIV/AIDS, syphilis, congenital syphilis, viral hepatitis, infections that cause vaginal discharge and cervicitis, urethral discharge, genital ulcer, pelvic inflammatory disease, HPV, intestinal enteric infections, zika and HTLV. The entire technological and bibliographic base underwent a presentation adaptation, as the Chatbot operates by a question and answer model and therefore needed the content to be constructed this way, so that its use was effective. After the logical construction, the Chatbot was connected to an online chatting application through the tool provider. There was also an association between Chatbot and technical knowledge in "Javascript" programming. For full operation and availability to the public of the tool, other components were needed, such as a computer, cell phone and telephone line. The Chatbot had a cell phone number, which the person added to the contacts and with that started the conversation, via Whastapp, as the intention was to maintain privacy so that the person would feel more comfortable in exploring their doubts. In response, the software presented a list of the main diseases and the user was free to choose any of the topics listed.

The tool was disseminated at strategic points in the municipality of Passos (Minas Gerais, Brazil): ESF (Family Health Strategies), at the School Ambulatory (where the Testing and Counseling Center - CTA - responsible for the treatment of STIs in the municipality is located and the region), at the University of the State of Minas Gerais (UEMG) and in some high schools. In view of the analysis of the Chatbot platform reports, we realized that the number

of accesses (246) was satisfactory given its 65 days of availability. In addition, the total number of messages received by the Chatbot during this period was 1,427. It is evident, in view of the above, that the tool proved to be effective in its recommended objectives, as well as providing an empowerment of the users of the tool, being, therefore, a reliable alternative of access to information with relevance in the context of education and communication in health.

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